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ABSTRACT

Diagnosticians of handicapped children need to provide the teacher with quantitative and qualitative descriptions of how a child succeeds to bridge the gap between evaluation and the prescriptive program. The child's performance and the demands of the task should be delineated. Variables of development influenced by the impairment should be emphasized to demonstrate the effects of the impairment on the child's learning pattern. Aspects of attention, learning style, level of assistance required, and response mode need to be evaluated. The diagnostic prescription should reflect not only the child's individual adaptive needs but also his needs as a member of his class and should include an array of appropriate activities. (DB)

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TRANSLATION OF ASSESSMENT DATA INTO PRACTICAL CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

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Paper presented at the International Conference on Exceptional Children, April, 1976.

Translation of Assessment Data into Practical Classroom Procedures

Anticipating the long awaited psychological to yield results helpful in formulating educational decisions, the teacher often finds herself reading meaningless stanine and standard deviation quotients. A quotient and a few areas of designated weaknesses rarely provide the teacher with information she does not eventually acquire through daily observation and direct experience with the child (Haeussermann, 1958; Jedrysek, Klapper, Pope, & Wortis, 1972). Hunt (1975) stated that statistical factors are of relatively little value in choosing the circumstances best predicted to foster the development of new abilities and motivation systems in children. Hunt (1975) stated that statistical factors are of relatively little value in choosing the circumstances best predicted to foster the development of new abilities and motivation systems in children. Keogh (1972) substantiated the fact that traditional approaches to assessment have resulted in either a summary of global scores or psychodynamically interpreted IQ's, neither of which easily translated into educational programs. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how the evaluation serves as an effective instrument in detecting the interrelationships of the child's cognitive style, his developmental level, the task media, and teacher variables that comprise the formula for prescribing curriculum objectives for teachers.

Unfortunately, reports comprised of scaled scores and mean standard deviations fail to reflect how or why a child performs as he does and it is at this juncture that educational diagnosis overrides psychological testing in pinpointing the child's educational needs. Emphasis is focused

on systematic observation and the child's response rather than a score, accomplishments and strategies rather than failure. The educational diagnostician is the critical element in discerning and formulating the match between the child's cognitive style and the characteristics of the instructional setting in which the child must function (Keogh, 1972). Kagan, Rosman, Day, Albert, & Phillips (1964) suggested that the evaluator should acknowledge the interactions between the disposition of the learner and the task and translate this information into pedagogical procedures matching the preferred strategy of the child. Concommitantly, the diagnostician translates evaluation data into replicable classroom instructional materials and procedural techniques most appropriate for developing sequential learning behaviors. The diagnostician can more quickly assess the child's capacity in each learning process and institute an in-depth probe of areas in which the teacher has expressed specific concern. Early discovery of the match through a process-oriented evaluation prevents the frustration and disappointment that both the teacher and child encounter in the process of trial and error methodology. Teachers of multihandicapped children seldom have the time or opportunity to isolate specific factors impeding their children's learning process.

> Having successfully taught his highly verbal visually impaired child identification of number groups within five, one teacher became perplexed in his attempts to teach the child simple addition concepts within five. Revealed in the educational evaluation was the child's lack of the same-different concept essential for the comprehension of an addition task. The assessment data similarly disclosed her inconsistent conceptualization of the numbers one through five. Collaboration between the teacher and diagnostician yielded that the child's knowledge of five was consistent only with the explicit materials, sequence, and method employed by the teacher but generalization of the concept to dissimilar media or procedures was lacking within her repertoire.

Formulation of the match between the child's learning style and educational program is arrived at through information acquired as the child responds to the task situation and manipulates task media. Tasks are presented to the child in structured activities designed to evoke a specific response via stimuli selected for eliciting goal directed behaviors (Banus, 1971). The activities are constructed to organize and specify the range of the child's behaviors, his attention span, and the level of assistance required for completion of the task. Immediately obvious from the child's response with the task should be the functional level of the behavior and its next sequential stage. Responses must be positively described as the most useful comments in an evaluation will be those that the teacher can immediately translate into classroom experiences. Simply informing a teacher that a child failed to build a three cube pyramid or that he has deficient perceptual-motor abilities provides the teacher with neither a basis from which to begin teaching a specific skill nor a procedure for the most feasible way to sequentially develop a rather nebulous range of skills. The child's performance and the demands of the task should be delineated so that the teacher knows what was expected from the child and how he reacted to those demands.

> John independently imitated building a four cube train although his attempts to imitate a three cube pyramid resulted in his placing the last block on top of the first rather than in the middle. After being physically guided once to build the pyramid, John reconstructed it, requiring only tactual cues to remember the space between the two base cubes.

Defining the child's proficiency level in an area of behavior informs the teacher where the child is in the developmental sequence in comparison with other children of his chronological age and implies a state of readiness to benefit more from one form of instruction than another (Beller, 1970).

> The majority of John's adaptive behaviors were similar to those expected of a 3½ year old child, although he demonstrated scattered successes within the 42 to 48 range in association and memory abilities.

Variables of development influenced by the impairment should be emphasized to demonstrate the effects of that impairment on the child's learning pattern. Similar functional levels in fine motor vary greatly in their relevance to development in the cerebral palsied child and the deaf child with no motoric abnormalities. The overwhelming effects deafness impose on the acquisition of language should be stressed in discussing the deaf child's latency in concept formation.

Other elements of the media or its presentation which are influenced by an impairment should be clearly delineated. Specifying the distance from which the visually impaired child can efficiently manipulate large and small objects and the position where materials are most readily observed or are ignored assists the teacher in knowing the size of the materials and where to place them to enhance maximum perception. Positioning of materials as well as of the child is an imperative factor to translate to the teacher when the child is cerebral palsied. Working over a bolster may facilitate his reaching for objects whereas sitting upright in a chair may inhibit this ability. Some cerebral palsied children can only see objects if they are placed directly to one side of the child rather than in the midline of their bodies.

Tasks maintaining the longest as well as the shortest intervals of attention should be enumerated as well as materials which the child enjoyed or resisted. Integration of a favorite skill with a preferred media may suggest a mode of teaching a conceptual task. The child who lacks the ability to match and resists placing colored squares on top of each other

can acquire this skill by dropping colored counting objects into plastic jars coded with matching colored cloth tape. Size discrimination can be taught to a child enjoying manipulative skills by having him match washers of various sizes to their corresponding-sized hooks on a board rather than having him draw lines to matching circles in a workbook.

Identification of tasks to which the child attends the longest or which he seeks out such as puzzles, drawing items, memory tasks, or sound toys, may indicate effective reinforcers for a specific child. The Premack principle of employing high probability behaviors (Haring & Lovitt, 1967) has proven much more effective in changing behaviors in multihandicapped children than have food reinforcers.

The level of assistance required by the child to successfully complete a task should also be conveyed to the teacher. Some children must be totally physically guided through tasks while others may only require a gentle tactual prompt to initiate the task. Providing a demonstration may be sufficient in evoking behaviors while a combination of modalities, visual and auditory, must be stimulated to effect completion of a task. Observation of the level of assistance required by the child may simultaneously reveal the child's primary model of learning, i.e., visual, auditory, tactual, or a combination of any sensory or motor input.

Alerting the teacher to the child's response mode, his attention span with specific items, characteristics of media and its presentation to which he most efficiently attends, reinforcers, and the level of assistance most consistently required assists the teacher in planning for the integration of the prescriptive activities with her own teaching style.

Many variables influence the effectiveness of the diagnostic prescription in the classroom. If the program is to have any relevance in the classroom, the diagnostician must design it to incorporate the child's total class milieu. The prescription should reflect not only the child's individual adaptive needs but also his needs as a participating member of his class. In formulating a child's prescriptive program, the diagnostician should be familiar with the general format and routine of the lass in which the child will function. The daily schedule, time alloted for each child, and media available in the class should be the focal point around which the child's individual program is formulated. Effective programs are those which simultaneously meet the teacher's and the child's needs. When possible, activities prescribed should make allowances for including classmates having the same developmental needs and suggest media that affords training skills profitable for other children and applicable to other conceptual and adaptive domains. The expediency of flexible activities and media justifies time required for suggested teacher made materials or cost of recommended materials while concomittantly proffering opportunities for social interaction and reciprocal cooperation from the children.

> John is an 11 year old visually impaired cerebral palsied child placed in a class with nine other severely handicapped children. Examples of activities designed to meet his adaptive, social, visual, and motoric needs while simultaneously engaging him in cooperative efforts with fellow classmates were suggested by the evaluation report.
>
> 1. Use other classmates, having David stand between, next to, beside, in front of, and behind certain people.
>
> 2. Using linking chips, poker chips, counting bears, etc. for reinforcers, gather several children in a group for language work. Show the children, each in turn, a different picture of an animal, household item, clothing, food, etc. Each child must tell, in a complete sentence, as many things as he can think of

to describe the picture. Each time the child uses a complete sentence he receives a token (the chips or bears), until he can no longer think of anything else. Then tell the children other things about the picture.

3. Place the children in a semi-circle. Have one child (David) to be "IT." David stands behind each child, one at a time, as you display a large picture. Both children try to name the picture first. If David names it first, he moves to the next child. If the seated child labels the picture first, he becomes "IT" and David exchanges positions with him, taking his seat in the circle. If one child successfully labels the picture first, he becomes "IT" and David exchanges positions with him, taking his seat in the circle. If one child successfully labels all pictures, completing the circle, allow him to hold the pictures.

4. Have David and a partner distribute books, crayons, pencils to the class, or take milk cartons back to the cafeteria.

5. Whenever possible, have him help another child by carrying something, picking up dropped objects, finding a toy or crayon, holding the door.

Familiarity with the child's current or future educational setting will not always be possible; therefore, the diagnostician should suggest an array of activities which will meet the child's needs. Presented with several suggestions in each area of deficit, the teacher may then select the activities which most appropriately coincide with her classroom routine, availability of materials, and instructional technique. Activities and procedures should be written so as to allow for facile translation into goals, objectives, and procedures that can be interpreted and followed by parents, volunteers, practicum students, and teaching assistants.

Observations

Pronouns depicting masculine and feminine gender were readily identified in their image form when cued by the prepositional situation (she is standing next to a chair; she is standing between a boy and a girl). Pronouns of plurality and neuter gender were not within her receptive repertoire. When the referent corresponding to it was an inanimate object, Teresa pointed to a person and designated only one item when the stimulus was they, them, or their.

Informed of the child's developmental need, her learning style and reinforcing activities, the teacher may then select a suggested activity and derive from it a goal: the activity, in turn, becomes the procedure for teaching the goal.

Pronouns

1. Select two children, one of each sex, and a large toy or piece of gross motor equipment (barrel).

   a. Seat one child in a chair and one on the floor; alternate the positions of the children and the toy.

      (1) Verbally direct Teresa to place a hoop around it between _____ (name of child) and _____.

      (2) Verbally direct her to place the hoop over the child that corresponds to he is sitting on the floor, where

      (3) she is sitting in the chair.

The child's total life space and cognitive style interact with the evaluator, the situational context, the media, and the task demands to describe a pattern of development and learning. While numbers from protocols fail to help the teacher teach, quantitative and qualitative descriptions of how a child succeeded provides the teacher with the tools which comprise the bridge between the evaluation and the prescriptive program.

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